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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Health Department Emphasizes the Importance of Getting A Flu Shot During COVID-19 Pandemic**

**DUPAGE COUNTY**—This year, it is more important than ever for residents to get their influenza (flu) shot as we battle COVID-19, a different viral respiratory illness that can result in severe outcomes including hospitalization and death. While a vaccine for COVID-19 is still under development, there is a vaccine for flu that has been proven to be safe and effective over the past 50 years. Each season, millions of Americans are sickened with flu, hundreds of thousands are hospitalized, and tens of thousands die. Getting a flu vaccine can help you avoid co-infection with COVID-19 and flu, which may prevent even more severe illness.

“The best protection we have against the flu is the flu vaccine. Call your health care provider or local pharmacy to get yours today and help lower your risk of co-infection with flu and COVID-19,” said Karen Ayala, Health Department Executive Director.

In Illinois, influenza season typically starts in the fall and the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) recommends everyone six months of age and older get vaccinated against flu. The vaccine is available in either a flu shot, or in a nasal spray. Talk with a health care provider about what type is most appropriate for you. More information on the types of flu vaccine can be found on the [CDC website](#).

To increase accessibility to all DuPage County residents, The DuPage Health Coalition (DHC) is offering free flu shots to low-income, uninsured residents of DuPage County. In addition to flu vaccine voucher program, several local Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) are also offering flu vaccines to their uninsured patients. To learn more or request a voucher, visit [accessdupage.org/flu](#).

Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

-More-  
**STAY SAFE  
DUPAGE**



In addition to getting your flu vaccine, the Health Department recommends following the 3 W's for both COVID-19 and influenza.

- **W**ash your hands
- **W**atch your distance
- **W**ear your mask

Many of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are the same, such as fever and cough, but there are some differences. To learn more about the similarities and differences between symptoms of flu and COVID-19, visit the [CDC website](#). If you experience symptoms of either flu or COVID-19, self-isolate and contact a health care provider. They can talk with you about testing and other measures you should be taking.

Influenza antiviral drugs can be a second line of defense for the treatment of those who get sick with flu. Studies have found that in addition to lessening the duration and severity of symptoms, antiviral drugs can help prevent flu complications. It is important to start antiviral medication quickly, ideally within the first two days of symptom onset, especially in hospitalized or severely ill patients as well as high-risk patients. Children under five years old, adults age 50 years and older, pregnant women, persons with chronic medical conditions are all considered high-risk and should contact a healthcare professional at the first signs of influenza symptoms. These include a sudden onset of fever, sore throat or cough, body aches, chills and tiredness.

To find flu vaccines in your area, visit <https://vaccinefinder.org/find-vaccine>.

For more information about flu, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

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